9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Waica



123
721
bringing in supplies from the plantation and distributing them among the huts. They were obviously preparing for a long siege.

Barker, the missionary, told us he had thrown his shot-gun into the river to save him from having to take part. Rape, he said, was at the root of every conflict—the kidnapping of boys or girls according to whether a clan had a surplus of men or women without mates. Sometimes a young warrior had to [535] prove himself and in such cases rape is the best method, since it tests endurance, patience, resource and skill no less than strength.

On this occasion, the women had lost all their earlier bashfulness—a group of six of them never leaving us. We had seen the eldest of them twice before, and three of the others had been in the village when we had passed through on our downstream trip. It seemed they must have vouched for our friendliness for nobody asked us for machetes and matches. 123

On returning to our boat we found six stalks of bananas had been put in it for us. We were sorry that we had nothing but a little *manioc* to offer in return. As we left we met three Waikas from a neighbouring clan. In honour of their hosts [302] and doubtless to cut a good figure, each had painted himself all over with violet dye.

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We passed the Guaharibo Rapids at dawn on November 22nd and by the following day were at the foot of the rapids at Peñascal. We had brought lifting tackle to use where necessary, but with only four of us—and somewhat tired at that—we were anxious to avoid overland porterage wherever we could.

The falling water had uncovered acres of rocks with little channels running between, offering a safe passage through. At other times we had to assault the main channel knowing that if the engine gave out we must lose boat, provisions and equipment, if not our lives. For this reason, if ever there was enough water to float us in any subsidiary channel, we took it every time.

[pgs 172 to end of book not processed]

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18



which more stable types of alliance can develop. Nor do they overtly acknowledge the relationships between trading and feasting cycles to village interdependency. In this regard they are like the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia: They have a "functional ignorance" of the more significant adaptive aspects of their trading institutions. To both the Yanomamö and the Trobrianders, the mechanisms by which peoples from different groups are compelled to visit each other are ends in themselves and are not conceived to be related to the establishment of either economic or political interdependency. For the Yanomamö participant in a feast, the feast itself has its significance in the marvelous quantities of food, the excitement of the dance, and the satisfaction of having others admire and covet the fine decorations he wears. The enchantment of the dance issues from the dancer's awareness that, for a brief moment, he is a glorious peacock that commands the admiration of his fellows, and it is his responsibility and desire to present a spectacular display of his dance steps and gawdy accouterments. In this brief, ego-building moment, each man has an opportunity to display himself, spinning and prancing about the village periphery, chest puffed out, while all watch, admire, and cheer wildly.

The hosts, too, have an opportunity to display themselves and strut before their guests. Moreover, the very fact that they have given the feast is in itself a display of affluence and surfeit apparently calculated to challenge the guests to reciprocate with an equally grandiose feast at a later date.[1] Each good feast deserves and calls forth another, and in this way allies become better acquainted with each other as they reciprocate feasts during the dry season and over the years.

## Historical Background to a Particular Feast

One of the feasts I witnessed exhibited all the features of intervillage politics. Before describing this feast, I will give the historical antecedents to the event, recapitulating a number of points discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of the history of Kaobawä's village. The significance of the events will then become clear, for Kaobawä's prior relationships to the guests at the feast had a great deal to do with the outcome.

In 1950 Kaobawä's group, almost friendless, beleaguered by enemies, and somewhat isolated, began cultivating an alliance with the Iwahikoroba-teri (see map, Fig. 2–8), a Shamatari village, some two days' traveling distance southeast of their own village at Kreiböwei. The Iwahikoroba-teri were on friendly terms with another Shamatari group, the Möwaraoba-teri, from whom they had separated some years before. Kaobawä's group, on the other hand, was at war with this village because members of his own group murdered a friendly Möwaraoba-teri visitor in 1940, touching off a series of raids between them. Anxious to develop an alliance, Kaobawä's group accepted a feast invitation from the Iwahikoroba-teri and visited that village to participate in the feast. Up to that point they were only on trading terms with them.

The Iwahikoroba-teri, however, had made a prior arrangement with their friends, the Möwaraoba-teri, to help them massacre Kaobawä's men and abduct his group's women. The Möwaraoba-teri were hidden in the jungle outside the village when Ka-

[1] The competitive aspects of feasting in many primitive societies has been dealt with at length by Marcel Mauss, whose essay *The Gift* is now an anthropological classic.